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Rhetoric and Devolution – Time and Space in Welsh Labour Rhetoric on Devolution

David S. Moon

Studying ‘British Politics’ is rhetorically complex. Is it the study of the politics of *Britain* (or *Great Britain*), a polity encompassing three nations, England, Wales and Scotland? Or the politics of the *United Kingdom*, uniting Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the latter often being treated as a ‘place apart’)? Studying ‘British Politics’ has in fact often meant studying *English* politics; analyses focusing upon the most populous element of the collective Union, where formal political power ultimately resides in the central, Westminster Parliament. For Britain, then, read *England* (or even just London). Foundationally, the governance of Britain and its study is thus a rhetorical issue. The 1997 Labour government’s devolution of powers away from Westminster to assemblies in Wales, Northern Ireland and London, and a parliament in Scotland pushed this into the spotlight.

With devolution the UK shifted from a centralised unitary state to a more pluralistic system of governance, creating not only new legislatures but new cadres of sub-national elected representatives and multi-level party systems. It thus created new arenas wherein controversies arise and play out. This is not simply a matter of the new legislatures, but also the spaces orbiting these governmental levels: inter-party – between the parties competing and interacting within them – and intra-party – both horizontally and vertically, between the different levels within those parties. All of this places new demands on political argument; in particular, the question of the status of these new arenas, and thus ‘*British* politics’ and what it refers to, is rhetorically contested.

At the heart of this are arguments over the ‘place’ of politics and its development. As such, alongside classic appeals to *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos*, conceptually *stasis*, *kairos* and metaphor play key rhetorical roles in political arguments: *stasis* relating to the determining of jurisdiction and the space of conflict; *kairos* to what is ‘appropriate’ given the contingencies of time; and metaphors being specifically linked to the ‘naming’ of the subject discussed. This chapter illustrates the effective role of such rhetoric in debates over how Britain’s systems of sub-national government should develop, through a case study analysis of the arguments within the Welsh Labour Party during Rhodri Morgan’s tenure as First Minister and nominal Welsh Labour leader (2000–2009), regarding the question of devolving direct primary powers (DPP) to the National Assembly for Wales.

Welsh devolution

While Scotland was immediately granted primary powers over a range of devolved policy areas, Wales’s Assembly had only secondary powers – being able to amend primary legislation from Westminster, but not create any directly. This situation was largely a legacy of the internal dispute within the Labour Party – the dominant, hegemonic political party in the Principality (aka ‘Labour-land’) – between those sceptical of and enthusiastic for devolution. Yet, if the former’s reluctance constrained the Assembly’s powers when the initial legislation was drawn up, it nevertheless created a new arena wherein enthusiasts could loudly argue their piece.

Even before the first Assembly Members had been elected, arguments started, calling for further powers for the Assembly. In 2002 an independent commission was created, in part, to investigate the case for DPP. This chapter specifically focuses upon the period surrounding the release of this commission’s 2004 report and the *Government of Wales Act*

2006, when the likelihood of internal tensions was further complicated by Labour's position as governing party in both Westminster and Cardiff Bay.

Argument for DPP

The Richard Commission's recommendation that DPP be devolved immediately was deeply controversial within Welsh Labour. In his initial response as leader in Wales and First Minister, Rhodri Morgan AM stated: 'We all have good reason to be proud at what this signifies ... a sign of growing maturity in the political process' (Hetherington, 2004). Morgan (2004) was more loquacious in a subsequent article in the *Western Mail* where he stated:

The most fundamental question is whether Wales-only laws should be proposed, debated, scrutinised and enacted in the Houses of Parliament in London, or in the Assembly in Wales. The Richard Commission says it should happen in Wales but after a kind of apprenticeship period to develop the legislative skills. I warm to that approach.

Morgan's basic argument following Richard's report appealed rhetorically to *kairos*, stating that a *mature* Assembly would/should have direct powers. In this seemingly simple argument, however, two contradictory but simultaneously co-affirming messages were articulated regarding the status/nature of this maturity. This is because the idea that an Assembly granted DPP *would* be a mature Assembly, in the context of Morgan's statements, meant both *if* and *when*: that is, (i) *if* the Assembly was mature it would have these powers and (ii) *when* the Assembly has these powers it would be mature. The argument was thus that *if* the Assembly was already mature it should have these powers, but if it was *not*, then it required they be given as, without them, it could not be mature. Whether the Assembly was deemed mature or not at the present time, therefore, it was necessary it be granted DPP on grounds of maturity.

Perhaps the clearest argument in support of devolving DPP came not from Morgan, but from Carwyn Jones AM – Welsh Labour leader and First Minister since 2009, but then the Environmental Affairs Minister in Morgan’s administration. Jones set out his primary arguments for devolving such powers in his pamphlet *The Future of Welsh Labour* (Jones, 2004) which again linked maturity with DPP.

Jones noted that there were ‘many in the party who argue that the Assembly should not get primary powers, or at least not yet, and there is yet to be a full debate on the issue’ before rejecting ‘[t]he present structure of devolution in Wales’ as ‘a mess’ (Jones, 2004, p. 19). This mess, Jones argued, was due to the initial choice ‘[t]o give the Assembly limited powers in devolved areas’, a choice, so he described it, ‘akin to giving a carpenter half a set of tools. A good job can be done, but it would be better to have a full set’ (Jones, 2004, p. 20). Jones’ carpentry metaphor linked a particular, forceful image with the (*Labour*-led) Assembly: the image of the craftsman, a mature, skilled labourer deprived of the tools within their workshop (the Assembly) which logic dictates they need to do their job. Where Morgan, in his position as First Minister and party leader, spoke diplomatically of an ‘apprenticeship’ period for the Assembly in which it would ‘develop ... skills’, Jones adopted the metaphor of as an already skilled labourer requiring respect.

This image arguably resonated with Jones’s subsequent description of the situation this alleged withholding of these ‘tools’ had brought whereby:

As things stand the Assembly Government must continually knock at Whitehall’s door to get primary legislation. Although it has been successful in obtaining Wales-only legislation and Wales-only clauses in Bills, these are no substitute for having the ability to do it yourself, particularly if a future Tory government in London fails to answer the door... (Jones, 2004, p. 20)

To Jones's carpenter metaphor was thus added a spatial one in the form of a door: lacking the necessary tools at their workshop through which to do the job themselves the allegorical craftsman must ask outside for them placing the 'Assembly Government' in a juvenile dependent role and as such weakened and unsafe: the un-trusted child, still reliant upon their possibly unfriendly, possibly withholding parent (the *mother* of all parliaments no less).

This notion of weakness due to dependency lay at the heart of Jones' rhetoric, as the following passage demonstrates:

Problems will inevitably occur when there is a government in London of a different shade to that of the Assembly which may not be as willing to listen. Not only that, opportunities will arise to roll back devolution because the Assembly does not have any reserved powers. The Assembly is dependent for its power on primary legislation in Westminster.

Tied to this danger of dependency was a related argument of equivalence, whereby this state of reliant immaturity was contrasted with other constituent parts of the United Kingdom:

This is not the case in Scotland or Northern Ireland or indeed in the Isle of Man or Alderney. Wales is in a position of unique weakness, which can only be rectified by the Assembly gaining the powers of every other legislature in the United Kingdom ... Wales is the only constituent part of the UK that lacks the ability to make its own laws as right. It is in a uniquely weak position as a result. (Jones, 2004, p. 19)

The relative nature of this alleged weakness provided Jones with a two-pronged argument for devolving DPP: If the relative weakness of the Assembly was to be overcome, Westminster would have to grant it the powers he argued for – cutting the apron strings, as it were – as only in this way, freed from dependency's resulting dangers, could the former be declared a mature, self-dependent body; but this devolution of power would be nothing more than

granting the equivalent powers of equivalent polities deemed mature enough to hold them. As Jones put it: ‘the devolution of primary powers in devolved areas to the Assembly would simply place Wales on a par with the other UK nations and create a better symmetry that would enhance the unity of the UK’ (Jones, 2004, p. 21).

In these manners Jones’ argument for DPP, as with Morgan, was rhetorically one of *kairos*, being structured around the concept of maturity – specifically the message that it was only by having DPP that the Assembly would be mature. Similarly, the logic of this argument was two-fold: the Assembly would be mature (i) because it would be freed from dependence and granted the means of self-reliance (in certain areas, anyway); and (ii) because it would be granted comparable status with other constituent parts of the UK deemed to be its contemporaries with regards to national-status – or in the case of the Isle of Man or Alderney, its juniors.

As a political space, Wales was thus articulated as one of many equivalent nations within the Union and maturity linked at the same time to the notion of national-status. This was a rhetorical combination of arguments of *kairos* and *stasis* (that is, maturity and polity) with the Welsh promoted as a national people in need of the legislative powers representative of this standing, and the heart of the country located in the Assembly – this being the political space where powers must be held for the status of maturity and (thus) the related standing of national-status to apply.

This same line of argument was repeated following the *Government of Wales Act 2006* in which the Assembly was granted further powers in the form of legislative competency orders – a system by which the devolved body could request primary powers over particular areas from Westminster on a case-by-case basis. Here key voices still calling for DPP came from members of small but vocal ginger-group Welsh Labour Grassroots

(WLG). Prominent WLG members Nick Davies and Darren Williams (2009, p. 54) argued that ‘while the 2006 Act supposedly allows the Assembly to take over the detailed drafting of primary legislation affecting Wales,’ it remained ‘beholden to MPs to grant the necessary authority’. This was dangerous, they argued, since ‘[a]ny proposition that appears even slightly radical risks being vetoed by Westminster politicians or civil servants’. The carpenter’s tools, in other words, could still be withheld if their plans weren’t approved. With this danger in mind, they claimed, ‘[t]he remedy is clear: only when it can directly exercise primary powers will the Assembly genuinely have the scope to give effect to its political decisions’ (Davies and Williams, 2009, p. 56) – that is, only with DPP could it achieve and operate as a mature, developed institution (*cf.* Morris, 2005).

Their argument went further, however; as they saw it, ‘a majority of the people of Wales clearly consider that they belong to a distinct nation, with a shared history and culture and discrete interests’ and ‘[i]t should, therefore, be for the people of Wales themselves – not the British parliament – to determine their governmental arrangements’ because ‘[t]he Assembly is the manifestation – however imperfect – of the general will of the people of Wales; rather than Westminster deciding how much power it should cede to Cardiff, then, it should be Cardiff that decides how much power it takes’ (Davies and Williams, 2009, p. 56). Rhetorically, like Jones, DPP was declared a necessity for a mature Assembly whilst simultaneously linked to Wales’ national status via the ability to make ‘national’ home-grown policies. As such, Davies and Williams’s arguments were again couched in rhetorical appeals based around *kairos* and *stasis*. Returning to the Richard Commission’s report: unlike Morgan’s initially cautious response, others were immediately enthusiastic in their support, Newport MP Paul Flynn telling the BBC (2004d):

A lot of us feel excitement about this. For the first time in six centuries, we have our own government and that marvellous building is going up in Cardiff Bay. What we

want to see is not a half parliament but a parliament that's equipped to do the job.

...We have the elected members, we'll have the building soon. Why on earth not give them the powers to do the job.

At heart this was a simple argument: The Assembly exists – physically, corporally, legislatively – and therefore ‘why on earth’ should it not have DPP (like the metaphorical carpenter) ‘to do the job’?

This question was Carwyn Jones’ rhetorical trump card also: ‘It is often said’, Jones (2004, p. 21) claimed, ‘that the Assembly must prove itself, and that a solid case must be built up to support the transfer of primary powers to Cardiff’, countering: ‘Yet devolution has occurred, and primary powers have already been given to Scotland and Northern Ireland. Now that there is an Assembly, and now that England [sic], Scotland and Northern Ireland all have primary powers, the argument is not whether Wales *should* have these powers, but why it *should not*.’ The onus, he argued, was therefore not with those arguing *for* the transfer of powers, but ‘on those who argue against primary powers to make their case as to why Wales alone is not suited to being able to make its own laws in devolved areas’ – to wit: ‘It is for Welsh Labour to move this debate forward in a mature and sensible fashion’ (Jones, 2004, p. 21).

The rhetoric of maturity thus came full circle: A mature National Assembly would have DPP; the Richard Report demonstrated, in Morgan’s words, such ‘maturity’ (*cf.* BBC, 2004a); the Assembly *is* mature – and representative of the nation; the debate over DPP must be taken forward, therefore, and done so in a ‘*mature and sensible* fashion’ where the onus was placed upon ‘those who argue against primary powers...’. In this manner Jones figuratively called out those who disagreed with his position, portraying *their* position (or at least their conduct in arguing their position) as immature and foolish. The mature position in

the mature debate was that the Assembly be granted the powers a mature body should have. Here a rhetorical appeal to *logos* – the logic of the argument – came to bear, the facts-of-the-matter, as so arranged, clearly pointing in one direction.

Morgan (2004) had fished in the same waters when, regarding those against Richard's proposal, he declared:

Those instant critics of Richard include those who opposed the creation of the Assembly in the first place and naturally they don't want it to have law-making powers. Others think there should never be any Wales-only laws. But Parliament in London has always passed a few Wales-only laws, even back in the 16th Century – not many, I grant you, but there will always be some Wales-only laws being passed.

Opposition to DPP for the Assembly was thus pooh-poohed as extreme (anti-devolutionist) – questioning critics' *ethos* – or historically unaware – deriding their *logos* – and subsequently able to be overlooked. This noted, Morgan posed a classical rhetorical question which 'cannot be ducked': 'Where should those Wales-only laws be originated and passed, or rejected for that matter?'

Jones too, took on 'doubters' within the party – tackling those who might attempt to portray his own position as extreme (in this case, nationalist). In response to this he stated that:

...the advocates of primary powers are simply embracing what is already the policy of the Scottish Labour Party and the policy of the UK government in Northern Ireland. It is a little difficult to accuse the late Donald Dewar and Tony Blair of being nationalists. It is also thought that it would lead to the break up of the UK, although the Scottish example gives the lie to this. (Jones, 2004, p. 19)

Jones made similar pronouncements when speaking to the Welsh media around the launch of his pamphlet when he once again declared that the ‘question is not so much why the Assembly should have primary powers, as why it shouldn’t’ (Bodden, 2004); and here he turned to the language of national equivalence once more, asking: ‘Does it really make sense that of the eight legislatures in the United Kingdom and Crown dependencies, the only one without primary law-making powers is the Welsh Assembly?’ Describing the then existing system whereby the Assembly submitted a list of Bills to Westminster each year seeking to gain a place in the Queen’s Speech, Jones asked ‘Why do we need to do that? Scotland doesn’t, England doesn’t [sic], Northern Ireland doesn’t’, continuing that ‘Primary powers for dealing with the Welsh language rest at Westminster and that doesn’t make sense’ (Bodden, 2004). None of it made sense to Jones – it was not sensible! This, of course, was coming from the man who had called for a mature and sensible debate.

The basic line of argument those supporting further powers sought to establish thus had three points related to the concept of maturity: that (i) without DPP, the National Assembly for Wales was not a mature institutional body, or, in other words, that a mature Assembly would have such powers; (ii) the Assembly either already was such a mature body, or soon would be and therefore should have such powers; and (iii) within the debate over DPP for the Assembly, the mature position was (therefore) to grant their devolution while, conversely, disputing this position was immature. This argument was simultaneously related to a particular conceptualisation of Wales as a socio-political space. This took the form of the notion that: (i) Wales was a *national* space and the equivalent of others such as Scotland and Northern Ireland already granted the powers its maturity – as established – demanded; and (ii) the institutional heart of Welsh politics, wherein such (mature) powers should be held, was the Assembly in Cardiff Bay (where, notably, many of those arguing this case within the party happened to be AMs).

This twin-track argument weaved together rhetorical appeals to *kairos* and *stasis* – it was about the appropriate time (maturity) and the appropriate place (Cardiff, Wales): Wales, *as a (mature) nation*, deserved DPP; whilst conterminously, only with these powers could Wales truly *be a (mature) nation*. Internally inconsistent, this was a classic form of nationalist rhetoric. Such arguments were furthermore based upon an appeal to *logos*, pitting a logical, ‘mature’ case against an apparently illogical, ‘immature’ case, linked with the emotional *pathos* of national identity and longing, and subsequent identification of the nation as political space. It was furthermore about *ethos* in terms of trust, whereby the granting of the Assembly’s maturity symbolised its position as a body which could be trusted with power and as an argument of character – that is, about the *ethos* of those who disagreed with the devolution of such power. This was powerful stuff. However, internal consultation found that most Welsh Labour members did not accept Richard’s recommendation regarding DPP in 2004 (Welsh Labour, 2004). How then did those against devolving DPP argue their case?

Argument against DPP

Blaenau Gwent MP Llew Smith (2004, p. 135), a visceral opponent of further powers for the Assembly, first rejected the argument, described above: devolving fewer powers to Wales than to Scotland was an ‘insult’, declaring this to be ‘a nationalist argument’ and asking fellow Welsh Labour members: ‘Are we so unsure of ourselves in Wales that we have to copy the Scots, when we were informed that one of the reasons for devolution was that were [sic] different from the rest of the United Kingdom?’ (Smith, 2004) In his call for self-assuredness and disparaging of the un-assured nature of his foes, Smith appealed to both *pathos* and *ethos* but also, it can be argued, to *kairos* in the form, once again, of maturity. The charge against supporters of DPP that they felt a need to ‘copy’ others, that they were ‘unsure’ of themselves, brought with it the insinuation of an undeveloped and thus immature

identity – one that was counterpoised with an alternative wiser (mature) one. More than this, Smith also appealed to *logos* by arguing that Welsh national distinction did not justify *ipso facto* equivalent powers to Scotland, but rather the opposite: that is, the call for DPP on the basis of parity with equivalents was logically nonsensical if the above was accepted.

This line of reasoning furthermore attempted to discredit the case for further powers on the basis that it was essentially nationalist and thus illegitimate from a (true) Labour Party perspective. Nationalism, for large sections of the Labour Party in Wales, is – to appropriate Lenin – an infantile disorder, which goes against basic Labour values of internationalism where the interests of the working-class are placed above the bourgeois frivolities of national constructs. It was such a view-point Smith tapped into when he argued that, if Richard's recommendations regarding DPP were followed, Labour was 'in danger of adopting a nationalist programme' – stating that he was 'not arguing that all those who supported an Assembly, or who are now demanding a Parliament are nationalists', but that 'their demands are taking us – step by step – down the separatist road' (Smith, 2004, p. 134). Rhetorically, Wrexham MP Ian Lucas articulated the same message when he declared himself 'very concerned about being carried along by political elites undertaking a pseudo-nationalist agenda' (quoted in Hetherington, 2004). In both cases the *ethos* of those calling for DPP was questioned – portrayed as crypto-nationalists – and framed as naïvely dangerous.

The argument of supporters was dangerous, the oppositional tendency claimed, because it focused entirely upon the Assembly – what *it* deserved and needed – and thus failed to appreciate that the locus of power in Wales is not simply Cardiff Bay: An argument of *stasis* – of the definition of the political space being argued over – political power in Wales was emphasised as also, by necessity, held and executed at Westminster. In this similar vein Ian Lucas thus complained that the Richard Commission 'did not consider very important

issues such as the way public services in north east Wales are delivered' (BBC, 2004c). Specifically Lucas had cross-border provision in mind, a subject he returned to in 2008, describing how 'Nationalist separatism would threaten that services – stopping services at the border ... Current devolution arrangements allow these services to continue' (*House Magazine*, 2008).

Clwyd West MP Gareth Thomas (2004, p. 128) raised this same issue in his response to the report's findings when he declared that he was 'not against primary powers in principle, but the principled case against an extension of powers to the National Assembly for Wales would be based upon that "geo-political" relationship between Wales and England. We have a porous land border and cross border patterns of economic activity and service provision'. These 'patterns', Thomas argued, included 'disparities of performance between the NHS in Wales and England' and it had to be taken into account that as '[t]he report acknowledges ... there is close integration between UK departments and Assembly departments and Wales would lose influence in Whitehall if primary powers were given'. Together, as noted, these arguments involved an entirely different rhetoric of *stasis* from that of those advocating DPP, whereby the locus of Welsh politics extended beyond Offa's Dyke.

Returning to *kairos*, Llew Smith also lambasted the argument that the Assembly deserved DPP on the basis of its legislative maturity: 'They have the cheek to demand extra powers when they haven't used the ones at their disposal', Smith told the *Guardian* (Hetherington, 2004), declaring that, by so doing, supporters demonstrated a lack of 'courage or principle' to use existing powers (BBC News, 2004b). Here again Smith mocked his opponents for their lack of *ethos*, specifically a lack, again, of maturity. The portrayal of supporters of DPP as impatient was further expressed by Lucas during an intervention in a 2007 House of Commons debate on House of Lords Reform where he argued: 'The lesson

from devolution in the United Kingdom is that there is immediate pressure from the institution to change the constitutional arrangements again. If there is an elected element, that pressure will be immediate and constant, and we will be coming back every year to have this debate' (Hansard: HC Deb, 6 March 2007, c1398).

This argument – basically, that the Assembly was not yet ready for further powers, was not mature enough to exercise them, but was nevertheless demanding them – also came from within the Richard Commission itself. Ted Rowlands, Labour representative and former MP, offered a dissenting statement, included in the final report, where he argued: 'I do not believe that the experience and evidence of just four years of the devolution settlement justifies concluding at this stage that it should be supplanted by an alternative model. However, the experience of operating the settlement over the coming years may justify such a change' (Richard Commission, 2004, A8). Maybe, but not yet, the message went, and much like the argument for DPP itself, it continued following the 2006 Act.

Linked to this was an argument about priorities; about what Labour's 'grown-up' policy focus should be. The message of those against DPP for the Assembly was that Labour should put away childish things, so to speak, and focus upon the *real* concerns of the *real* people of Wales. Thus, interviewed in the *Western Mail*, Blackwood councillor Nigel Dix stated his view 'that the Assembly should learn to use the powers it has well, before taking on any extra powers. It should learn to walk before it can run' and claimed 'I wouldn't like to say what members of the local party think on this matter [of DPP]. I don't come across many people who think the Assembly should have more powers' (quoted in Shipton, 2007). A similar message came from the critics amongst the Welsh Parliamentary Labour Party, with Lucas telling BBC News (2004d) that '[t]he Richard Commission did not represent the views of my constituents in north east Wales' and stating, a full four years later: 'My constituents

care most about public services. ...I believe, [the current devolved structures] reflect the views of my constituents. They want recognition of difference but delivery of high quality public services' (quoted in *House Magazine*, 2008, p. 33).

Gareth Thomas MP had made a similar point in 2004, stating that what he knew 'from my constituency surgeries and my post-bag is that no-one has complained to me about insufficient powers, although plenty have grumbled about the state of Welsh hospital waiting lists, and the size of their council tax bills' (2004, p. 129). Writing at the same time, Llew Smith stated that he had 'not experienced any pressure from the electorate for additional powers' (2004, p. 136) while another MP, Don Toughig, told the BBC that the devolution of further powers 'is not what people are talking about, they're not writing letters to me about it – it's just not important to people' (BBC News, 2008). As a North Walian MP anonymously quoted by BBC News (2004c) put it: 'Richard has made the case to people on the Richard Commission, to the political glitterati in Wales. He hasn't made the case to the people on the streets and unless he wins that debate it will be a hollow shell'. Dai Harvard MP was even more forthright:

the priority must not be a convention on more powers or some commission about the Barnett formula or the Welsh language again. They are not my priorities; they are nonsense, frankly, in terms of what is immediately necessary, but they may be desirable at a later date. That is the sort of debate that we can continue to have. Have it at the Oxford Union – I do not care where it takes place. (Quoted in Livingstone, 2007)

In each of the above cases, those arguing for powers were portrayed as out of touch with the general public's wishes. They were members of the 'glitterati' discussing a subject merely

worth student-level debate at elitist institutions. Questions/assertions of priority, and with them maturity, thus clearly lay behind such accusations.

The key individual to articulate this message was Paul Murphy MP during his period as Secretary of State for Wales following the passage of the 2006 Act. In the run-up to the 2007 Assembly elections Murphy (2007a) wrote that: ‘At the forefront of peoples’ minds as they decide how to vote ... will not be these constitutional factors, but consideration of how the Assembly can improve their day-to-day lives...’ This same argument was repeated by Murphy at the post-election Wales Labour conference:

Schools and hospitals, tackling crime and bringing jobs to Wales ... [are] the things people care about most, so it’s delivering these services that should be our priority.... It is understandable that people debate these issues [of powers]. However, as a party committed to social justice, we should always keep the services that matter most to our people at the forefront of our thinking. (*Western Mail*, 2008a)

Continuing this theme, Murphy would tell the Commons he had ‘received two letters about the constitutional arrangements in Wales in the past year, both of which opposed them, but that is all that I have had. No one rings me up, e-mails me, writes to me or stops me in the street about that issue’ (Murphy, 2007b) and that ‘it’s so important to the people we represent that we do not lose sight of the issues which matter to them. ...at the end of the day it’s about schools, it’s about hospitals, and transport and jobs’ (*Western Mail*, 2008b). In making these arguments Murphy (*op cit.*) described himself ‘as a devo-realist’; Hywel Francis MP, then chair of the Welsh Affairs Select Committee, agreed, writing that ‘Murphy’s mantra of making constitutional changes only if it guarantees improvements in public services and particularly through UK and European partnerships, is an aspiration I share because these are

the hopes too of most of my constituents’ (quoted in *House Magazine*, 2008, p. 34). This was the realist view, *contra* Jones, Morgan et al. – and as such, also the mature one.

The rhetoric of those against devolving DPP thus again sought to establish three points related to idea of maturity and so, a particular conceptualisation of time. These were that: (i) legislative bodies do not require DPP to be considered mature; (ii) the Assembly is not a mature institution so has not earned such powers; and (iii) it was immature to advocate devolving DPP as an immediate objective as other more issues were primary – scepticism of the call for DPP therefore being the mature position. This argument was simultaneously related to a particular conceptualisation of Wales as a socio-political space taking the form of an argument that: (i) Wales is a national space and equivalent, as a polity, with others such as Scotland and Northern Ireland, but this did not necessarily mean it should have the same powers as them; and (ii) the institutional heart of Welsh politics – the place wherein such powers should be held – was not *only* the devolved Assembly in Cardiff Bay but also Westminster (where, again notably, the most vocal section within Welsh Labour were MPs). Once again this argument weaved together rhetorical appeals to *kairos* and *stasis*, but also to *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. The *ethos* of supporters was questioned with regards to their character, portraying them as either crypto-nationalists or their dupes, as irresponsible, cowardly, lacking patience and elitists, distanced from the *real* concerns of the *real* people of Wales (even if legislating from Cardiff, not London). Strong stuff again, but convincing?

Conclusions

The Welsh historian Gwyn A. Williams (1985) famously asked ‘When was Wales?’ Devolution and the creation of new political arenas led to the future-focused questions regarding where and when Wales ‘is’ as a political polity. In the intra-party debates within Welsh Labour analysed above, these were articulated in conflicting appeals to *kairos* and

stasis, whereby the appropriateness of DPP were linked to antagonistic conceptions of political maturity (time) and the locus of Welsh politics (space). Under Morgan the party was clearly split between one tendency arguing for a ‘new’ post-devolution politics based around national identity and a strengthened Assembly, against another defending an ‘old’ class-centred, internationalist political approach which had been the pre-devolution, pan-British norm. What both agreed on however, albeit with different prescriptions, was that Welsh politics needed to ‘grow up’.

In 2011 a ‘Yes’ vote in a Wales-wide referendum finally unlocked DPP for the Assembly. Speaking at that year’s Labour Party Conference Carwyn Jones (2011), now First Minister, told delegates:

On 3rd March, the people of Wales voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Assembly having powers to make ‘Welsh Laws’. Laws made in Wales, for the people of Wales. This is the year that Wales truly came of age.

As such, he reiterated the previously detailed rhetoric of those who had long supported DPP: a new post-devolution governmental settlement framed in terms of *kairos* and *stasis*, wherein maturity and coming of age is equated with Welsh national-status and laws being ‘made in Wales’. With calls from Jones since for the further devolution of extended powers over areas such as policing, security and taxes, this line of argument as to what constitutes ‘grown up’ Welsh (and indeed *British*) politics sits confirmed as the rhetorical consensus within which the devolved political class governs.

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